

Public Law 102-93  
102d Congress

Joint Resolution

Designating August 1, 1991, as "Helsinki Human Rights Day".

Aug. 14, 1991  
[H.J. Res. 264]

Whereas August 1, 1991, is the 16th anniversary of the signing of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) (hereinafter in this preamble referred to as the "Helsinki accords");

Whereas on August 1, 1975, the Helsinki accords were agreed to by the Governments of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, the German Democratic Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, the Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Yugoslavia;

Whereas the Helsinki accords express the commitment of the participating states to "respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion";

Whereas the participating States have committed themselves to "ensure that their laws, regulations, practices and policies conform with their obligations under international law and are brought into harmony with the provisions of the Declaration of Principles and other CSCE commitments";

Whereas the participating States have committed themselves to "respect the equal rights of peoples and their right to self-determination, acting at all times in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with the relevant norms of international law, including those relating to territorial integrity of States";

Whereas the participating States have recognized that respect for human rights is an essential aspect for the protection of the environment and for economic prosperity;

Whereas the participating States have committed themselves to respect fully the right of everyone to leave any country, including their own, and to return to their country;

Whereas the participating States have affirmed that the "ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities will be protected and that persons belonging to national minorities have the right to freely express, preserve and develop that identity without any discrimination and in full equality before the law";

Whereas the participating States recognize that "democratic government is based on the will of the people, expressed regularly through free and fair elections; and democracy has as its foundation respect for the person and the rule of law; and democracy is

the best safeguard of freedom of expression, tolerance of all groups of society, and equality of opportunity for each person"; Whereas on November 21, 1990, the heads of State or government from the signatory States signed the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, a document which has added clarity and precision to the obligations undertaken by the States signing the Helsinki accords; Whereas the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe has made major contributions to the positive developments in Eastern and Central Europe and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, including greater respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals and groups; Whereas the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe provides an excellent framework for the further development of genuine security and cooperation among the participating States; and Whereas, despite significant improvements, all participating States have not yet fully implemented their obligations under the Helsinki accords: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That—*

(1) August 1, 1991, the 16th anniversary of the signing of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (hereinafter referred to as the "Helsinki accords") is designated as "Helsinki Human Rights Day";

(2) the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation reasserting the American commitment to full implementation of the human rights and humanitarian provisions of the Helsinki accords, urging all signatory States to abide by their obligations under the Helsinki accords, and encouraging the people of the United States to join the President and Congress in observance of Helsinki Human Rights Day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities;

(3) the President is further requested to continue his efforts to achieve full implementation of the human rights and humanitarian provisions of the Helsinki accords by raising the issue of noncompliance on the part of any signatory State which may be in violation;

(4) the President is further requested to convey to all signatories of the Helsinki accords that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is a vital element of further progress in the ongoing Helsinki process; and

(5) the President is further requested, in view of the considerable progress made to date, to develop new proposals to advance the human rights objectives of the Helsinki process, and in so

doing to address the major problems that remain, including the question of self-determination of peoples.

SEC. 2. The Secretary of State is directed to transmit copies of this joint resolution to the Ambassadors to the United States of the other 34 Helsinki signatory States.

Approved August 14, 1991.

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**LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.J. Res. 264:**

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 137 (1991):

July 29, considered and passed House.

July 31, considered and passed Senate.